

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 H-02 PA-02
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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND:RGH
APPROVED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND
PA/PRS - MR. CARTER
H - MR. FLATEN
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/EGY - MR. MARTHINSEN
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

-----046192 082344Z /70

O 082302Z MAY 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USCINCEUR
DOD
JCS WASHDC
CIA WASHDC 0000
USICA
NSC WASHDC 0000

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD, TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:SOPN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - MAY 8

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE
EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR MAY 8, 1978.
FYI ONLY, SPOKESMAN TODAY WAS HODDING CARTER III.

Q. ON THE AIRCRAFT SALE, HAS THE STATE DEPARTMENT
CONSIDERED THE POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING THE NUMBERS ON THE
ISRAELI SIDE OR, ALTERNATIVELY, DECREASING ANY NUMBERS ON
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THE ARAB SIDE OF THE "PACKAGE" -- IF YOU'LL EXCUSE THE
EXPRESSION?

A. I'M NOT SURE WE DIDN'T USE THIS GUIDANCE BEFORE, BUT
IN ANY CASE OUR BASIC POSITION IS THAT WE HAVE PUT FORWARD
PROPOSALS WHICH WE THINK STAND ON THEIR OWN FEET AND
REFLECT THE NEEDS OF THE COUNTRIES IN THE AREA.

I THINK WE SAID BEFORE THAT WE ARE IN THE POSITION OF
WANTING TO LISTEN TO LEGITIMATE CONCERNS OF MEMBERS OF
CONGRESS AND WE ARE CERTAINLY WILLING TO CONSIDER SUGGES-
TIONS WHICH REFLECT LEGITIMATE CONCERNS. BUT I DON'T HAVE
ANYTHING FOR YOU ON SPECIFICS WHICH MIGHT BE CONSIDERED
TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT SUCH CONCERNS.

Q. IN ADDITION TO THE NUMBERS, DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT
HAVE ANY ASSURANCE FROM THE SAUDIS THAT EVEN IF THEY GET
THE AMERICAN PLANES THEY MIGHT NOT GO AHEAD ANYWAY AND
BUY FRENCH AIRPLANES LATER?

A. I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY SUCH ASSURANCES.

Q. SO THEN THERE'S NOTHING TO STOP THEM FROM DOING THAT?

A. I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANYTHING TO STOP ANY SOVEREIGN NATION FROM MAKING ARMS DEALS.

Q. ISN'T IT TRUE THAT THE SAUDIS HAVE ALREADY TOLD THE U.S. THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE BASING THESE PLANES AT TABUK?

A. THAT'S CORRECT.

Q. SO THAT THIS IS REALLY NOT AN ISSUE. IT CAME UP IN SOME OF THE SUNDAY PROGRAMS THAT IF WE GOT THIS KIND OF ASSURANCE FROM THE SAUDIS IT MIGHT EASE THE COMMITTEE'S WAY. WE'VE ALREADY GOT THOSE ASSURANCES.

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A. I THINK THAT IS IN AN AREA OF CONCERN. WE HAVE SPOKEN ON THAT BEFORE, AS TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SAUDI ASSURANCES.

Q. AND THE SAUDIS HAVE ALSO ASSURED THE U.S. BEFORE THIS THAT THEY'RE NOT GOING TO USE THE PLANES AGAINST ISRAEL?

A. THEY HAVE ASSURED US THAT THEY HAVE NO INTENTION OF SO USING THEM AND THAT THEY ARE INTENDED FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES.

Q. IS SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER MEETING WITH ANY CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS?

A. YES, HE IS, THIS AFTERNOON. I DON'T HAVE HIS SCHEDULE IN FRONT OF ME, BUT I THINK IT'S AROUND 3:30-4:00 O'CLOCK, SOMEWHERE IN THERE, WITH HOUSE MEMBERS, AT ANY RATE -- ZABLOCKI, FASCELL, AND OTHERS.

Q. WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF THAT MEETING?

A. IT IS TO DISCUSS THE MIDDLE EAST ARMS PROPOSALS.

Q. AND YOU'RE NOT AWARE THAT HE MAY BE CARRYING SOME COMPROMISE PROPOSALS TO THE COMMITTEE?

A. SPEAKING VERY DIRECTLY TO THAT QUESTION, I'M NOT AWARE OF HIM CARRYING COMPROMISE PROPOSALS. YOU MEAN ON NUMBERS AND THAT SORT OF THING?

Q. HOW DO YOU WANT ME TO PHRASE THE QUESTION SO I CAN

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GET THE ANSWER I WANT? (LAUGHTER.)

A. WELL, WE ARE IN ACTIVE CONSULTATION WITH CONGRESS ON THEIR CONCERNS.

Q. ALL I'M SAYING IS DOES HE HAVE SOME SPECIFIC PROPOSALS, RECOMMENDATIONS, SUGGESTIONS, IDEAS THAT MAY SMOOTH THE PASSAGE OF THE DEAL?

A. WE'RE VERY INTERESTED IN SEEING THE PROPOSALS PASSED. I KNOW THAT HE AND OTHERS HAVE BEEN CONSULTING WITH CONGRESS. I AM NOT AWARE THAT THERE IS SOME NEW PACKAGE IN HIS HAND AT THIS TIME. I AM SURE, HOWEVER, THAT THE FULL SUBJECT IS BEING DISCUSSED.

Q. PUTTING ASIDE THE WORD "PACKAGE" IS THE ADMINISTRATION NOW CONSIDERING AN OFFER -- WHICH IS, IN EFFECT, AN ADDENDUM TO THE CURRENT PACKAGE -- THAT IT WOULD FAVORABLY CONSIDER SENDING ISRAEL ADDITIONAL PLANES OVER A LONGER SPAN OF TIME -- IN OTHER WORDS, GOING INTO '86 OTHER THAN JUST '83?

A. I'M NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO GO INTO THE DETAILS OF THE CONVERSATIONS WE'RE HAVING WITH CONGRESS AT THIS TIME. I WOULD NOTE THAT AS WE CONSIDER CONCERNS, WITH THE BACKGROUND THAT WE BELIEVE THE PROPOSALS WE HAVE PUT FORWARD SUFFICIENTLY MEET THE ARMS REQUIREMENTS AND SECURITY REQUIREMENTS OF EACH OF THE PARTIES, IF THERE WERE ANY CHANGES, THOSE ARE NEGOTIABLE BY COMMON CONSENT -- I.E., YOU DON'T HAVE TO SUBMIT A NEW PACKAGE IF BOTH SIDES AGREE. BUT IN ANY CASE, I DON'T KNOW AT THIS POINT THE STATE OF PLAY. TO THE DEGREE I DO KNOW SOME PORTIONS OF THE CONVERSATIONS, FRANKLY THEY ARE (GOING ON) RIGHT NOW BETWEEN CONGRESS AND THE ADMINISTRATION AND I CAN'T GO MUCH FURTHER WITH IT.

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Q. LAST WEEK KEN BROWN SAID THAT THE SUGGESTION THAT CAME UP -- I THINK IN THE SENATE COMMITTEE -- THAT ISRAEL SHOULD HAVE TEN MORE F-15S WAS ONE THAT WAS WORTHY OF CONSIDERATION. HE SAID THIS WAS AN EXPRESSION OF LEGITIMATE CONCERNS BY THE SENATORS INVOLVED. TODAY FORMER SECRETARY KISSINGER SUGGESTED THAT IT SHOULD BE

TWENTY ADDITIONAL F-15'S. I'M WONDERING NOW: IS THAT ALSO CONSIDERED WITHIN THE REALM OF LEGITIMATE CONCERNS?

A. JODY ACTUALLY JUST WAS HANDLING THIS THING OVER AT THE WHITE HOUSE AND WAS ASKED ROUGHLY THE SAME QUESTION, I'M TOLD, AND SAID ROUGHLY WHAT I'VE ALREADY SAID -- THAT WE ARE WILLING TO CONSIDER LEGITIMATE CONCERNS THAT HAVE BEEN RAISED -- THAT WE THINK THAT WHAT WE HAVE PROPOSED IS GOOD AND SUFFICIENT FOR THE NEEDS OF EACH OF THE PARTIES BUT THAT THE PURPOSE OF CONSULTATION WITH CONGRESS IS TO CONSULT.

Q. YOU POINTED OUT EARLIER THAT THE NUMBERS ARE NEGOTIABLE BY COMMON CONSENT. DID YOU MEAN TO IMPLY THAT THERE COULD BE NEGOTIATIONS HELD THIS AFTERNOON?

A. NO. I WAS SIMPLY TRYING TO UNDERSCORE WHAT HAS BEEN ASKED AS A TECHNICAL QUESTION BEFORE.

Q. THERE ARE SOME CYNICS IN THIS TOWN WHO HAVE EVEN SUGGESTED THAT THE OFFER OF PLANES TO THE ISRAELIS WAS DELIBERATELY LOW TO BEGIN WITH SO THAT THERE WOULD, IN FACT, BE SOME MANEUVERING ROOM WHEN THE NEGOTIATIONS GOT A LITTLE TOUGHER. HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND TO THAT KIND OF SUGGESTION?

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A. I BELIEVE THAT THE FIGURES THAT WERE ARRIVED AT WERE CALCULATED, AS SECRETARY BROWN TESTIFIED, ON THE BASIS OF WHAT SEEMED TO MEET THE NEED OF THE PARTIES, WITH THE END RESULT BEING TO MAINTAIN THE BALANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND TO INSURE THAT AT THE END OF IT ISRAEL'S SECURITY WOULD BE UNQUESTIONED. I AM NOT ABLE TO DEAL WITH THAT KIND OF CONJECTURE BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT THOSE FIGURES WERE HONESTLY ARRIVED AT.

Q. IF THE BALANCE HAS BEEN THAT SENSITIVELY CALIBRATED, THEN WOULD IT NOT UNDO THE BALANCE TO SUDDENLY START INCREASING THE NUMBER NOW?

A. AS WE HAVE NOTED, THERE WERE SEVERAL PURPOSES TO THE PROPOSALS TO GO FORWARD -- I MEAN THE WHOLE, OVERALL SET OF PROPOSALS -- AND AMONG THEM WERE THE BALANCE AND LEGITIMATE NEEDS OF EACH OF THE PARTIES.

Q. HAVE YOU GOT ANYTHING ON THE FRENCH PULLBACK FROM TYRE FROM THE UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE?

A. NO, I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING. I HAVE SEEN REPORTS TO

THE EFFECT OF THE POSITION OF THEIR TROOPS, BUT I DON'T
HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT. VANCE

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